

HOUSE No. 49

Mr. Verga of Gloucester, petition of Anthony J. Verga and others for the establishment of a task force (including members of the General Court) to investigate the methods of conducting state elections via the Internet. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Anthony J. Verga	Douglas W. Petersen
Bruce E. Tarr	Thomas P. Kennedy
Richard T. Moore	Barbara A. L'Italien

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN ONLINE VOTING TASK FORCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the
2 contrary, there is hereby established an Online Voting Task Force
3 (“Task Force”). Said Task Force shall be established to conduct
4 research, studies, and interviews to investigate various methods of
5 conducting state elections via the Internet.

6 The members of the Task Force shall be as follows: The Secre-
7 tary of the Commonwealth or his or her designee; The Director of
8 the Office of Campaign and Political Finance or his or her
9 designee; the Senate and the House Chairs of the Joint Committee
10 on Election Laws; a representative of the state committee from
11 each political party officially recognized by the Commonwealth;
12 two representatives from the Massachusetts City and Town Clerks
13 Association, one city clerk and one town clerk; one Senator
14 appointed by the Senate President; one Representative appointed
15 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and five citizens
16 appointed by the Governor, provided at least two of which must
17 have experience with elections law, and provided further that one
18 member have knowledge of Internet privacy and security issues.

19 Each member of the Task Force must be eligible and registered to
20 vote in Massachusetts state elections. Within one hundred twenty
21 (120) days of the enactment of this bill the Task Force shall be
22 assembled.

1 SECTION 2. The appointed members of the Task Force shall be
2 responsible for conducting such reasonable research as is neces-
3 sary to prepare proposals and findings on the merits and demerits
4 of various methods of conducting state elections via the Internet.
5 Such research may include but is not limited to the following: an
6 evaluation of the technological options available to the Common-
7 wealth; an examination of the potential negative consequences of
8 instituting such a system, such as, privacy, fraud, verification, and
9 identity issues; a study of the costs, both monetary and social, that
10 each system might entail, including a rigorous cost benefit-
11 analysis of each option; and an estimated timeline for the institu-
12 tion of such a system.

13 The Task Force shall meet regularly and shall hold no fewer
14 than twelve (12) meetings during its tenure. No earlier than
15 twenty (20) and no later than twenty-four (24) months after the
16 initial formation, the Task Force must produce their final pro-
17 posals and findings, which must be distributed to the Governor,
18 the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and The Joint Committee on
19 Election Laws.

1 SECTION 3. Subject to appropriation, a sum of two hundred
2 thousand dollars shall be expended for the purposes of this Act.